

Rhymes of Realities



CHARLES W. CASSON



OTTAWA, CANADA

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A MERRY CHRISTMAS.

WHY should I wish you "Merry Christmas?"

My wish can bring no joy—

Or yours.

Joy ever comes unsought,

As fragrance comes to him who gathers flowers

Upon the path he treads.

Go, gather flowers of kindness !

Be Christly.

Enact the brother's part.

Give as the Christ has given,

Asking no favor in return.

Make merry some sad heart,

And then, unwished, enjoy

Merry Christmas !

A PRAYER.

I pray thee not for golden gift.
Thou knowest all my needs, and thou
wilt give
As much of treasure as my soul may lift,
And live.

I pray thee not for greater joy,
Or man's complaint of meagre dole ;
For too much happiness may cloy
And clog the soul.

I pray thee not for closer care.
Thou art my Father, and I cannot stray
Beyond the circle of thy love, or where
Thy kindness doth not sway.

I pray thee not for larger task.
Thou givest duties that do fit my need,
Not greater and not less. I only ask
For grace to do the common deed.

I pray thee not for longer life.
I an eternal, and it matters not
If I should linger in this world of strife,
O seek some fairer spot.

I pray thee but for truer trust,
The constant consciousness to bear
That as the sun outgleams the gleaming dust,
Thy love transcends my prayer !



THE LIFE, AND THE LEAF

WHo gathers up the fallen leaves
The tree of truth hath borne and shed,
To twine tradition's wreath, receives
No living truth,—the leaf is dead !

Who views the fallen leaf with woe,
As sign of truth's decadence, gives
No thought unto the fact that though
The leaf is dead, the truth still lives !

THE WIDER SEA.

WITHIN the land-locked bay I mourning
lie,

Soul-stirred by glimpses of the wider sea
Across the shallow bar that prisons me,
And breaks in laughter when I seek to fly.

In vain my wide-aspiring sails I spread
To catch the breezing impulse that would fain
Waft my soul onward to the open main—
In vain, since lies that locking bar ahead !

Yet, spite of all my fretting and unrest,
There sometimes comes to me, in calmer mood,
A consciousness of ever-present good,
And that the narrow-circling bay is best.

And so I wait, half conscious that for me
There surely stirs God's providential tide,
Upon whose broad breast sometime I shall ride
Across the bar, to sail the wider sea.

THE HEART OF EVENTS.

PEACE reigns in the depths of the ocean,
Though the billows tempestuous ride ;
And under all human emotion
God's verities calmly abide.

The truth is unchanged by our thinking,
However our doubtings assail ;
Though truth as it seems may be sinking,
The truth as it is cannot fail.

Divine purpose runs through all action,
Though chaos exist to our sense ;
And under all falsehood and faction
God rules in the heart of events !

LONGING.

THERE'S a language never spoken ;
There's a song that's never sung ;
There's a silence never broken
By the sound of mortal tongue.

There are waves upon thought's ocean
That shall never break in speech ;
There's an innermost emotion
That no human word can reach.

There's a meaning that is vaster
Than a metre can impart ;
There are soul-scenes that no master
Can depict by pencilled art.

There's a glimpse of joys elysian,
That our spirit-selves await ;
There's a momentary vision
Of a distant, open gate.

But each vague and voiceless longing
God in justice will fulfil.
For our God can do no wronging,—
He has stirred, and He shall still !

A PARABLE OF PROGRESS.

S AID the placid pool to the rippling rill,
As it rollicked near by on its race down the
hill :

“O stay with me here ! It is foolish and wrong
For you to forever be rushing along.
Stay here on the heights, for as sure as you flow,
You will only sink further and further below.
You are noisy and boisterous—be quiet and hear
The choir of the songbirds carolling near.
Be contented, my brother, and patiently try
To remain where the God of the clouds made you
lie.

It is wiser and easier far to lie still,”
Said the placid pool to the rippling rill.

Said the rippling rill to the placid pool,
As it lay in the shadows, so quiet and cool :
“I know: it is easy and pleasant to stay
In one’s flower-circled bed on the hillside all
day ;

That each leap leaves me lower ; and that, as I
flow,

A desert of death may await me below.

Yet some spirit impels, in such magical way,
That I feel it is better to simply obey.

And somehow, as onward I leap in the night,
Toward the strange, distant valley, I know it is
right,

And that safety is sure if I keep Nature's rule,"
Said the rippling rill to the placid pool.

So the placid pool lay selfishly still,
Reflecting the stars and the sunshine, until
Its purity paid the high price of its peace ;
Its waters grew stagnant ; its very release
Was cancelled in scorn by the sun overhead ;
And the placid pool died in its flower-circled bed,
But the rippling rill, as it sped on its way,
Grew larger and deeper and stronger each day.
The sunshine strewed gems on its breast as it ran
To do useful service for nature and man.
It grew to a river, and when duty-free,
It found permanent peace in the infinite sea.

CONTENTMENT.

WHEN the last truth has been spoken,
That may gleam across the mind ;
When the last link has been broken,
In the fetters of mankind ;
When the last fact has been sifted
From the falsehood and the fraud ;
When the last soul has been lifted
To behold the face of God ;
When the last wrong has been righted,
And men live in brotherhood ;
When the last goal has been sighted,
On the pathway toward the good ;
When the last sin is prevented,
And all life becomes sublime ;—
Then my soul may be contented,
And contentment be not crime !

A SONG OF SERVICE.

WHO serveth others serveth God,
Who loveth every man ;
Who aids the lowest of the race
To win a higher, holier place,
Best serves the Father's plan.

Who serveth others serveth self
In way most wise and real ;
For none can rise while others fall,
And truest gain is good of all,
And wealth the common weal.

Who serveth others serveth all,
Whate'er the deed may be ;
The smallest pebble of a gift
That love can drop will surely lift
The level of life's sea.

THE CRY OF A SOUL.



THOU, my other self,
In thy mad rush for power and pelf,
Hast thou no pity for the soul oppressed
Within the prison of thy breast ?

At birth came I into thy charge,
To live in limits mean or large
As thou decreed
By selfish act or noble deed.

To fall or fly,
To live divinely or to basely die,
Was nature's dual dower to me,
To be accepted or annulled by thee.

Thou hast denied the higher force,
Hast bound my wings, and padlocked my resource,
Hast robbed me of the heritage of God,
And flung me to the level of the clod !

Thou livest well !
Fame, wealth and luxury thy fortune swell,—
While I
Starved, stunted and subverted, die !

But hast thou never paused to think
That by your act we both shall rise or sink ?
Dost thou not know it true
That if I die, thou diest too ?

There cometh soon a fateful day
When all thy pampered power shall pass away,
And if thou livest, it must be
Because thou gavest life to me !

Wouldst live ?
Then free my faculties, and give
Unto thy spirit soul its sovereign sway,
And lo, both thou and I shall live for aye !



THE PLANT'S PRAYER.

LOW-NESTLING violets, and the stalwert
oak,

Tall vines that clamber, and ground vines that
run,

Alike the law of gravity revoke

And lift their leaf hands upward to the sun.

Each living plant, intuitively stirred,

Yearns skyward to the life-bestowing rays,

And by the reaching, without wish or word,

With instant answer to the sun god prays.

Within each human heart there ever lies

A force instinctive, born with very birth,

Whose impulse makes humanity arise

In reverential worship from the earth

To grasp the spirit-strength its needs demand.

It knows no language, needs no special pose,

But conscious simply of an outstretched Hand,

With silent yearning toward the blessing goes.

THE GLORY OF THE GLOOM.

I STOOD in the gloom of the gateway,
Whose portals had hidden from view
The form of the friend I had cherished,
And loved as a comrade most true.
Bereft, heavy-hearted, forsaken,
I lingered with shuddering breath
A while in the gloom of the gateway,
The gloom of the gateway of death.

And lo, as I lingered in sadness,
I felt that the shadows were cast
By the brighter light over the gateway,
Whose portals my loved one had passed.
Then I knew that the darkness of dying
Was only the shadows that rest
On the sorrowing lives of the living,
Because the Beyond is the best !

And so, in the shade of the gateway,
Its dimness has ceased to oppress,
For it tells of a radiant glory
Whose beauty we now cannot guess.
Sometime for each one shall the portals
Swing inward, and then we shall know
That death is the prelude of living,
And the gloom shall be lost in the glow !

ONLY A WORD.

It is only a word, in the silence,
A gleam in the gulf of despair,
A torch-light of truth on the tangle
Of paths that perplex and ensnare ;

And yet by the word that seemed wasted,
Things are that seemed lost in the night,
Some souls have been saved from despairing,
And led to a sense of its might.

Only God knows the power and the purpose
Of tiny truth-beams, kindly sent ;
For never is truth idly wasted,
And never is love idly spent.

There's no ray but is used in God's lighting ;
No act but has part in God's plan ;
On the faithful outgleam of your candle,
Pends the world-wide salvation of man !

TRUST YOURSELF.

TRUST yourself ! There is no greater
Than yourself in all mankind ;
The dependent soul is traitor,
And the begging soul is blind.
True divinity of being
God has given to His child ;
See the gift, and by the seeing
With all fate be reconciled !

Trust yourself ! God gave you forces
All-sufficient for your task.
Draw upon your own resources ;
Shall a God-child weakly ask
As poor mercies from another
What by right to him belong ?
Know that God has made you, brother,
And that God has made you strong !

GOD-VERITIES.

GOD lives !

Upon the open page
Of nature's illustrated bible-book
The truth reads clear. When each flower is a
page,

And forceful faith is sequel to the look
At God's leaf-letters strewn about
The path we tread, no soul can sanely doubt
The verity of God.

He only doubts whose blind eyes will not see
The truth writ plain in sky and sea and sod.
God lives ! In every leaf the message pleads
To be confessed in human speech.

The meadow's bloom, the sunset's flame,
And every wave on every beach
The truth proclaim :
God lives !

God loves !
That life is love ;
The living force perceived in every flower
Works for our good. Beneath, about, above,
Moves ceaselessly the living, loving power
As safeguard of the soul of man.
With myriad voices nature shows the plan
And loving thought of God.
The needless glories of earth's star-gemmed roof
And flower-strewn carpet-sod
Are not chance-formed, but purposed proof
That love is the supreme intent
Of force creative, and the pact
'Tween creature and Creator meant
The simple fact :
God loves !

God leads !

The love-laid plan

Whereby a bud attains its perfect bloom,

Includes as well the destiny of man.

Amid the thicket tangle and the gloom

God leads his child. By devious ways

He guides us out the soul-misleading maze

Of selfishness and sin.

All life is providential, though the way

Be rough, and hard the goal to win.

God leads, not only in the deed and day

Of ancient men, but now and here.

When clouds hang low, and storms impend,

And skies seem never more to clear,

Or wrong to have an end,

God leads !

THE MUD-SPECK'S PRAYER.

A TINY drop of muddy moisture lay,
Half mud, half crystal, on its bed of clay ;
From heights above, the sun, amid the blue,
With warm caress bent down and kissed the dew.
Responsive to the touch, the drop awoke
To sense of inward purity, and broke
From its soil-self, and rose, both winged and
warmed.

A mud-speck to a crystal gem transformed !

A human soul upon earth's level stood,
Clay-clogged, the evil fettering the good ;
Conceived of heaven, but besoiled of earth,
With low environs blasting its high birth.
God's love-light touched the soul with gentle
force,
Stirred into motion its divine resource,
Till, yielding, yearningly, it grew more fair
By the sublime and simple act of prayer !

